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A Last Will



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A LAST WILL





# A Last Will

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WILLISTON FISH



BOSTON

Alfred Bartlett

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THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS, BOSTON

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A LAST WILL



## A Last Will

**H**e was stronger and cleverer, no doubt, than other men, and in many broad lines of business he had grown rich, until his wealth exceeded exaggeration. One morning, in his office, he directed a request to his confidential lawyer to come to him in the afternoon — he intended to have his will drawn. A will is a solemn matter, even with men whose life is given up to business, and who are by habit mindful of the future. After giving this direction he took up no other

matter, but sat at his desk alone and in silence.

It was a day when summer was first new. The pale leaves upon the trees were starting forth upon the yet unbending branches. The grass in the parks had a freshness in its green like the freshness of the blue in the sky and of the yellow of the sun,—a freshness to make one wish that life might renew its youth. The clear breezes from the south wantoned about, and then were still, as if loath to go finally away. Half idly, half thoughtfully, the rich man wrote upon the white paper

before him, beginning what he wrote with capital letters, such as he had not made since, as a boy in school, he had taken pride in his skill with the pen:

**I**n the **N**ame of **G**od, **A**men  
**I**, CHARLES LOUNSBURY, being of sound and disposing mind and memory [he lingered on the word memory], do now make and publish this my last will and testament, in order, as justly as I may, to distribute my interests in the world among succeeding men.

And first, that part of my interests which is known a-

mong men and recognized in the sheep-bound volumes of the law as my property, being inconsiderable and of none account, I make no account of in this my will.

My right to live, it being but a life estate, is not at my disposal, but, these things excepted, all else in the world I now proceed to devise and bequeath.

**I**tem: And first, I give to good fathers and mothers, but in trust for their children, nevertheless, all good little words of praise and all quaint pet names, and I charge said pa-



rents to use them justly, but generously, as the needs of their children shall require.

**I**tem: I leave to children exclusively, but only for the life of their childhood, all and every the dandelions of the fields and the daisies thereof, with the right to play among them freely, according to the custom of children, warning them at the same time against the thistles. And I devise to children the yellow shores of creeks and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, with the dragon-flies that skim the surface of said waters, and

the odors of the willows that dip into said waters, and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees.

And I leave to children the long, long days to be merry in, in a thousand ways, and the Night and the Moon and the train of the Milky Way to wonder at, but subject, nevertheless, to the rights hereinafter given to lovers; and I give to each child the right to choose a star that shall be his, and I direct that the child's father shall tell him the name of it, in order that the child shall always remember the name of that star after he has

learned and forgotten astronomy.

**Item:** I devise to boys jointly all the useful idle fields and commons where ball may be played, and all snow-clad hills where one may coast, and all streams and ponds where one may skate, to have and to hold the same for the period of their boyhood. And all meadows, with the clover blooms and butterflies thereof; and all woods, with their appurtenances of squirrels and whirling birds and echoes and strange noises; and all distant places which may be visited,

together with the adventures  
there found, I do give to said  
boys to be theirs. And I give  
to said boys each his own place  
at the fireside at night, with  
all pictures that may be seen  
in the burning wood or coal, to  
enjoy without let or hindrance  
and without any incumbrance  
of cares.

**I**tem: To lovers I devise their  
imaginary world, with what-  
ever they may need, as the  
stars of the sky, the red, red  
roses by the wall, the snow of  
the hawthorn, the sweet strains  
of music, or aught else they  
may desire to figure to each

other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

**I**tem: To young men jointly, being joined in a brave, mad crowd, I devise and bequeath all boisterous, inspiring sports of rivalry. I give to them the disdain of weakness and undaunted confidence in their own strength. Though they are rude and rough, I leave to them alone the power of making lasting friendships and of possessing companions, and to them exclusively I give all merry songs and brave choruses to sing, with smooth voices to troll them forth.

**I**tem: And to those who are no longer children, or youths, or lovers, I leave Memory, and I leave to them the volumes of the poems of Burns and Shakespeare, and of other poets, if there are others, to the end that they may live the old days over again freely and fully, without tithe or diminution; and to those who are no longer children, or youths, or lovers, I leave, too, the knowledge of what a rare, rare world it is.









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